

**Lieutenant Governor John Garamendi's
Statement on Stem Cell Awareness Day**

SACRAMENTO – Lieutenant Governor John Garamendi, chair of the California Commission for Economic Development, today issued the following statement on Stem Cell Awareness Day:

“Today, on Stem Cell Awareness Day, I want to acknowledge the thousands of doctors and scientists worldwide utilizing stem cell research to help us find cures for the diseases and ailments that affect billions of people. Recent studies show that stem cell research has promise in treating severe burns, diabetes, leukemia, Parkinson’s disease, diseases impacting the central nervous system, and many other conditions.

“In 2004, the voters of California wisely allowed our state to take the lead in this important research via the California Institute for Regenerative Medicine (CIRM), and our leaders in Washington are also committed to this life-saving scientific research. With California becoming the stem cell research capital of the world, our sound initial investment in this research will yield a vibrant biotechnology and medical research industry in California that will strengthen our economy and create thousands of quality jobs.

“To make this dream a reality, we must maintain our competitiveness by creating a broadly educated workforce, and that requires a renewed investment in public education from kindergarten to the university level. The University of California is an epicenter of this research, and we must make sure it has the resources and qualified faculty and students it requires to discover the medical breakthroughs that will improve our lives. I applaud the numerous achievements of the CIRM and look forward to the advances we will make in the years to come because of stem cell research.”

The California Institute for Regenerative Medicine (CIRM) was established in November 2004 with the passage of Proposition 71, the California Stem Cell Research and Cures Act. Overwhelmingly approved by voters, the statewide ballot measure provided \$3 billion in funding for stem cell research at California universities and research institutions, and called for the establishment of an entity to make grants and provide loans for stem cell research, research facilities, and other vital research opportunities.

To date, the CIRM governing board has approved 307 research and facility grants totaling more than \$781 million, making CIRM the largest source of funding for human embryonic stem cell research in the world.

Lieutenant Governor Garamendi, who is also a University of California regent and California State University trustee, makes five appointments to the Independent Citizens' Oversight

Committee (ICOC), the governing board of CIRM.